

CONNECTIONS



2013

Writing Across the Curriculum
Winning Essays

Southwestern Community College

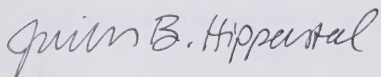
April 2013

Writing is part of the culture at Southwestern Community College. Writing is a gateway through which students can comprehend the past and look forward to the future. The Writing Across the Curriculum (WAC) program has set a goal to provide our students with as many occasions as possible to learn and to use the powerful tool of writing. Therefore, our students encounter varied opportunities to write in classes across the curriculum, encouraging them to investigate, to discover, and to understand. Our students learn that writing well involves hard work and dedication, as does any worthy goal. Achievement, then, calls for celebration.


It is my pleasure to offer you the winning essays from the Fifth Annual WAC Essay Awards. For this contest, current students can submit essays written for classes during this academic year, thereby demonstrating the writing they are challenged to do on our campus. Judged by a panel of instructors from across disciplines, the selected essays exemplify the critical thinking, original voice, and clear, yet powerful prose that combine to create excellent writing. I speak for the entire panel when I say that it was a privilege to read all the entries in this year's contest. The essays included in this publication are but a small sampling of the quality writing our students are producing in classes each semester.

As you read, I ask you to join in our celebration of student writing.

In celebration,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Jennifer B. Hippensteel". The ink is dark and the handwriting is fluid, with some loops and flourishes.

Jennifer B. Hippensteel
Writing Across the Curriculum Coordinator
Southwestern Community College



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Courtney Shuler

Ms. Meus

English 131-MD1

11 March 2013

The Liberty of Her Insanity

The unnamed narrator of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" is a dynamic character whose state of mind, as well as entire reality, changes dramatically over the course of the story. The narrator suffers from a "nervous depression" (417) that may be likened to Postpartum Depression for she mentions that "It is fortunate Mary is so good with the baby" (419). The possibility that the narrator has Postpartum Depression is made even more likely given the fact that Gilman herself suffered from severe depression after giving birth to her first daughter (Wiedemann 1). John, the narrator's husband as well as a physician, takes the narrator to a sprawling estate so that she may rest until she becomes well again. Confined to a large room on the top floor of the house, the narrator develops an increasing obsession with the yellow wallpaper that covers the walls and begins to sink deeper and deeper into her "hysterical tendency" (417). Although she displays many characteristics of a feminist by openly disagreeing with her husband's methods at first, the narrator soon withdraws back into her own psyche until she feels completely imprisoned and, at last, relinquishes herself to insanity as a means of being set free from her restrictive, male-dominated society.

When she first arrives at the house, the narrator openly defies her husband's orders which displays her strong will and desire to oppose traditional male authority in favor of what she believes is right. Although John insists that rest is the only cure for her condition, the narrator believes that "congenial work" and "society and stimulus" are the true answers to her recovery

(418). The narrator expresses her desire for company numerous times, but John refuses to allow any visitors, maintaining that “he would soon put fireworks in my pillow-case as to let me have those stimulating people about now” (420). Although John is a physician, the narrator’s continued desire for work and interaction displays her doubts in his knowledge about what is best for her. Instead, the narrator chooses to decide for herself what she needs which demonstrates that she has no problem going against her husband’s wishes, even though men were believed to know what was best for women during that time. The narrator even goes as far to think that “*perhaps* that [John being a physician] is one reason I do not get well faster” (417). In addition, the narrator continues to write even though she is met with “heavy opposition” (418). She refuses to give up something she loves just because her husband decides that it is not good for her. As the story progresses, the narrator actually writes more and more frequently, displaying her growing defiance against her husband. Even as she sinks deeper into her own insanity, the narrator still resists her husband by only pretending to sleep at night. According to literary critic Richard Feldstein, the narrator’s open opposition to her husband displays many of the attributes of a feminist, although some critics argue that the narrator’s descent into madness stops her from truly being considered a feminist character (Wiedemann 3). In addition, Feldstein maintains that the narrator’s actions throughout the story act to counter John’s male-dominated world view (Wiedemann 3). In this way, the only true alternative the narrator has to accepting John’s orders is to continue to oppose him although she unknowingly loses her own sanity.

When the narrator’s efforts to change her husband’s mind fail, the narrator turns her attention to the wallpaper and becomes increasingly more obsessed with its design and, in the process, begins to withdraw back into her own mind. Although the narrator first thinks that “I

should hate it [the wallpaper] myself if I had to live in this room long" (419), the narrator's love for the room grows the longer she stays in it and she believes that it may be "*because of the wallpaper*" (421). This change in attitude toward the wallpaper may indicate that the narrator begins to consider it a friend when John's frequent absence and refusal to allow guests leaves her feeling utterly alone. The narrator becomes so fascinated with the paper that she "determine[s] for the thousandth time that I *will* follow that pointless pattern to some sort of conclusion" (421). English scholar K.V. Rama Rao believes that this desire to find a conclusion in the wallpaper parallels the narrator's own desire to find meaning in her life (Rao 5). No matter how hard she tries, however, the narrator can never find a definite end to the confusion and realizes that "It makes me tired to follow it" (422). This tiresome feeling can also be equated to the narrator's own life, which has become so boring and lifeless that she has tired of it as well. As the days progress, the narrator focuses more and more of her energy on staring at the wallpaper and starts to notice that the wallpaper seems to change with the light. Fascinated with the changes she sees in the wallpaper, the narrator become somewhat of a reader to the paper's confusing story. According to English professor Nancy Glazener, the narrator develops into an "addictive reader who reads incessantly and who, while doing so, loses her last remaining hold on reality" (Hochman 2). Becoming more and more withdrawn, the narrator begins to see not only the pattern, but the distinct shape of a woman "creeping about behind that pattern" (423). Although her state of mind has clearly started to crumble, the narrator still has a good enough hold on reality to be slightly alarmed at seeing the woman and wishes that "John would take me away from here!" (423). Slowly falling into insanity, the narrator opposes her husband one last time in the hopes that she will finally be heard.

Seeing the form of a woman beginning to take shape within the wallpaper, the narrator still has enough of a grip on reality to realize that something is wrong with her and that she should leave the house. One night, after seeing the pattern of the wallpaper shake for the first time, the narrator decides to once again convince her husband that she “really is not gaining here” and that it would be best for them to leave (423). John, however, continues to exert his position as her caretaker and insists that she gotten much better. Choosing not to accept his evaluations of her, the narrator insists that her condition has only worsened. In addition, the narrator reveals that she is aware of her own growing mental instability by starting to tell her husband that she is “Better in body perhaps—” before she is cut off by John’s “stern, reproachful look” (423). John refuses to believe that the narrator has begun to lose her mind and instead convinces her that “It is a false and foolish fancy” (423). Soon after this final attempt to get John to allow her to leave the house, the narrator determines that there is, in fact, a woman within the wallpaper and that the pattern is actually bars that hold her in. This realization may be equated to the narrator’s own growing feelings of oppression by her husband’s male-dominating views, and thus the views of the society in which she lives (Rao 5). The narrator not only sees the woman in the wallpaper, she has become the woman, struggling to free herself from the constraints forcibly placed upon her.

As the story comes to a close, the narrator finally plunges entirely into her own insanity and, in the process, sets herself free. By day, the narrator witnesses the woman that she sees in the wallpaper “creeping all around the garden” and “in that long shaded lane” and she decides to imitate her (426). This creeping may be interpreted as a form of resistance against the constraints of society, for the woman in the wallpaper has escaped into the world; however, the fact that she must hide in the darkness suggests that society still has control over her

(Wiedemann 3). As the days leading up to her departure pass, the narrator works to pull the wallpaper off the walls in a desire to free the woman from behind the bars once and for all. She finally succeeds in this pursuit on the final day when John is supposed to come for her. The narrator works together with the woman in the wallpaper until "I pulled and she shook, I shook and she pulled, and before morning we had peeled off yards of that paper" (427). Looking around at all the women creeping about, the narrator wonders "if they came out of that wallpaper as I did?" (428). This statement suggests that the narrator believes she was trapped behind the bars of the wallpaper and society as well but has freed herself from it by tearing it down, and when John gains access to the room and sees her crawling around the floor she declares to him that "I've got out at last" and "you can't put me back!" (428). Shocked by her actions, John faints on the floor and the narrator proceeds to crawl over him. Although she has clearly become mentally unstable, the narrator views her insanity as a form of strength and asserts her triumph over John and the society he represents by crawling over him (Rao 6). In addition, some critics speculate that the narrator's insanity must have been temporary for she now has the ability to write about it (Wiedemann 3). If this is the case, the narrator's actions do not lead to insanity at all, but rather to rebirth and a newfound freedom from society's oppression.

The narrator of Gilman's "The Yellow Wallpaper" displays many of the attributes of a feminist in her defiance against her husband, and although she loses touch with reality and her sanity, she frees herself from the constraints of society and takes control of her own life. For the narrator, insanity becomes not a debilitating condition but a monumental strength. Trying to control her, John took the narrator to the house to rest, but in actuality he gave her the motivation to move and seek her own independence.

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Undercover Policing

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CJC 121 – Law Enforcement Operations

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Undercover Policing

Abstract

The undercover officer must rely upon anonymity and obscurity due to the secrecy of his investigations, and he typically assumes a false identity in order to infiltrate areas where the uniformed officer cannot. Originating in France in the late 18th century, the primary objective of undercover policing is to identify suspects and obtain evidence for a successful prosecution. Employed in a variety of criminal investigations and often in cooperation with all levels of law enforcement, this investigative technique is unique not only for the manner of its intelligence-gathering function but also for the physical and psychological risks to the officer as he participates in the crimes he has been assigned to investigate.

Undercover Policing

Introduction

The undercover officer must rely upon anonymity and obscurity due to the secrecy of his investigations, and he typically assumes a false identity in order to infiltrate areas where the uniformed officer cannot. Originating in France in the late 18th century, the primary objective of undercover policing is to identify suspects and obtain evidence for a successful prosecution. Employed in a variety of criminal investigations and often in cooperation with all levels of law enforcement, this investigative technique is unique not only for the manner of its intelligence-gathering function but also for the physical and psychological risks to the officer as he participates in the crimes he has been assigned to investigate.

The Covert and Deceptive Nature of Undercover Policing

Undercover policing has two significant characteristics that set it apart from conventional police work: It is covert and it is deceptive. Unlike officers who rely upon the authority of the uniform they wear to enforce the law, undercover officers rely upon their distinct lack of a uniform in order to enforce the law. Given the secretive nature of their assignments, anonymity and obscurity are tools of the trade, and their assumption of a false identity permits them the freedom to infiltrate areas where other officers cannot. As such, they attempt to blend in among their targets, dressing and grooming themselves in a manner that will allow them to circulate in certain places undetected as they gather intelligence and evidence for their investigation (Hess & Orthmann, 2012).

The covert and deceptive nature of their tactics is necessary so they can overcome the limitations placed upon conventional policing, allowing them to discover information that would be unavailable otherwise. In contrast to the reactive, multi-staged, investigative process performed by their uniformed counterparts where (1) an offense is discovered, (2) the offender is discovered, and (3) an arrest is made over a period of time, the proactive approach of undercover policing differs greatly. Undercover investigations take place before and during the perpetration of an offense with discovery of the offense and the offender, as well as the arrest, frequently occurring simultaneously (Marx, 1988).

The Origin of Undercover Policing

Undercover operations have been used by law enforcement around the world to target criminal matters, particularly when conventional policing has been ineffective. Contemporary undercover policing in the United States can be traced back to France in the late 18th and early 19th century. Francois Vidocq was a former criminal who became an undercover officer in Paris, believing that his covert involvement with the criminal element was the most effective way to apprehend a criminal. In the 19th century United States, Allan Pinkerton used his skills of deception with the Underground Railroad. It was not until 1936, however, that the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) began using undercover agents to battle Communist and Fascist espionage and sabotage, eventually leading to the FBI representing the national model for undercover operations (Wagner, 2007). Today, this has resulted in the extensive use of proactive undercover operations in the war on drugs, in anti-fencing sting operations, in apprehending online sex offenders, in infiltrating prostitution, organized crime, and white-collar crime, and certainly in the fight against terrorism. Officers have learned how to infiltrate the innermost

circles of their targets, detecting patterns of illegal behavior and literally catching perpetrators in the act. Having personally participated in the unlawful behavior, undercover officers are then able to provide direct testimony for the prosecution (Kruisbergen, deJong, & Kleemans, 2011).

The Undercover Operation

As stated previously, when undercover officers infiltrate criminal groups and their activities, their fundamental objective is to generate prosecutable evidence. While targets may range from narcotics to illegal immigration to terrorism, for example, the time frame for an operation may also range from short-term to long-term, sometimes lasting months or years. The type of undercover officer used may also vary, ranging from a plainclothes officer working light undercover who will eventually identify himself as a police officer and make an arrest, to an officer working deep undercover with a false identity, an altered appearance, and no direct contact with family, friends, and other officers for months or even years.

According to Miller (2006), there are six stages to an undercover operation: (1) the undercover team is selected, (2) the team is trained, (3) the operation is planned, (4) the team is deployed, (5) the operation is terminated (either successfully or unsuccessfully), and (6) the undercover officer is reintegrated into his usual roles in work and life. Officers selected for undercover work must demonstrate outstanding emotional stability under stress, appropriate moral and ethical values, exhibit resourcefulness and perseverance, be flexible in their role-playing, and be able to deliberately and convincingly create, nurture, and maintain intimate, personal relationships with an assortment of people who they will ultimately betray for the sake of the larger mission. In many instances, officers are selected because they are new recruits who

have not yet developed a police mindset, or because they are ethnic-looking and have foreign language skills.

Training provides the opportunity for the officer to learn and sharpen skills required for the undercover operation, particularly the interpersonal skills necessary to convincingly deal with others while in deep undercover. Ironically, although they are frequently faced with levels of potential danger far greater than those faced by other types of law enforcement (i.e., SWAT teams and hostage negotiation teams), undercover officers are often not as adequately trained. Such negligent training not only has legal liability concerns for the officers and their department, but it also may leave the officer unprepared for the operation and threatens the legality of the case if arrests are made. Just as important, inadequate training may leave the officer unable to recognize serious symptoms of stress, and the operation could be compromised as a result.

Proper planning and preparation are necessary for a successful operation. Most undercover officers prefer having the most information possible before going undercover. Each operation must have a detailed outline of the mission along with contingency plans for any unforeseen problems or emergencies. Plans are also vetted by the department's legal counsel and documented in writing. Provision must also be made for the undercover officer to have proper backup support as well as a contact officer to keep the undercover officer focused on his law enforcement identity and the goals of the operation. Creating the officer's cover identity is another part of the planning process. Roles must be as believable as possible because they might need to remain in character for long periods of time, and one slip could cost them their lives. This is why cover identities usually mirror the officer's real identity and persona as much as possible so there will be less opportunity for dangerous surprises. Profiling the target is also part of the planning process where gaining some insight into the target's thinking is useful for

undercover interaction and in determining which undercover officer is the best match for the target.

Deployment is the stage where everyone involved in the operation must be aware of their respective roles, methods of signaling for trouble have been established, any new intelligence is analyzed, and the undercover officer's family needs have been taken care of with the assignment of a family liaison who is also a member of the undercover team.

Termination is the official end to an undercover operation. At this point, the undercover team is required to organize the evidence they have obtained and to prepare for trial. The operation is customarily terminated for three basic reasons: (1) the operation was successful, evidence has been obtained, and arrests have been made or will be made, or (2) it has become obvious the purpose of the operation cannot be achieved under the current undercover plan, or (3) the security of the undercover officer has been jeopardized if his cover is blown. At times, a combination of these reasons may result in the termination of the operation.

The reintegration process is often accompanied by various syndromes. Some officers develop an inflated sense of self-importance for a job well done, some officers become paranoid if suspects escape, their cover has been blown, or threats have been made against the officer and his family. Other officers have difficulty losing their undercover role, may continue exhibiting sordid conduct and use foul language, may come to sympathize or identify with the target, or have lost their law enforcement system and have become corrupt. Usually, the transition back into regular police work is gradual, though, because the officer is still involved in processing evidence and testifying at trial. Many undercover officers are also encouraged to remain involved in training and planning future operations. The overall goal is to assist the officer in a productive approach while he returns to more regular responsibilities of law enforcement (Miller, 2006).

The Undercover Officer's Vulnerability

While living an undercover role 24/7, officers are faced with numerous physical and psychological risks for a variety of reasons. To illustrate, they are forced to change their identities and remain in character for months or years, they alter their normal appearance, they refrain from contact with their families, they continually observe illegal and harmful activity, they knowingly and deliberately establish close relationships with suspects they will eventually betray, they constantly live with the fear of discovery, they encounter officer burnout or complacency during a threatening situation, and all will run the risk of having their integrity corrupted.

Yet another vulnerability and danger they face is from confrontations with fellow officers. This occurs when they are mistaken for suspects while working undercover. Since they have worked so hard to blend in with the criminal element and frequently purchase guns and drugs as part of the operation, it is not surprising that they are so easily mistaken for real criminals by other officers. As such, when another officer pulls a gun on them, undercover officers are trained not to move, not to reach for their badges or guns, and not to turn their backs. Further, if they happen to be in the process of capturing a suspect, they are advised to let the suspect flee if it will prevent the other officer from firing (Schmidt, 2009).

The stress associated with living an undercover role 24/7 not only makes the officer's reintegration back into normal duty challenging, but it also leaves some officers vulnerable to alcohol and/or drug abuse. The reason this occurs is that the social context where they gather their evidence and the social behavior required to become accepted and establish credibility with the target supports alcohol consumption. Therefore, if alcohol consumption will assist in meeting tactical objectives, the officers are expected to do what is needed under the circumstances.

Studies have shown that officers who have worked too long undercover are prone to alcohol and drug abuse, especially when drugs are freely available and the officer is less inhibited (Girodo, 1991).

The diversity and uncertainty of undercover policing allows for flexible guidelines in the event of unforeseen circumstances or emergencies. For that reason, the methods used by undercover officers, in contrast to other law enforcement officers, also have a tendency to be unhindered by legislative or constitutional restrictions. Of significance is that judicial decisions for the last few decades legitimize and support diverse undercover activities and methods, especially as it pertains to possible violations of the Fourth and Fifth Amendments of the Constitution. For instance, under the Fourth Amendment, people have an expectation of privacy in their homes, and consent is the basis for a warrantless entry into the home by an undercover officer. The fact that he has been granted consent under a mistaken identity does not violate the Fourth Amendment, according to the Supreme Court, since the amendment itself does not protect a person's misplaced confidence that an individual to whom they reveal information will not later disclose it. In short, the general consensus is that undercover officers are entitled to special protections due to the great risks they face in their willingness to perform such dangerous jobs (Wagner, 2007).

Finally, authorized criminality is another issue which places the officer in a vulnerable position. Defined as the practice of allowing undercover officers to engage in behavior that would be considered criminal outside of the context of the investigation, it permits the officer to further his deception by participating in activity that appears criminal so he can maintain his fictitious identity. While regarded as a necessary and justifiable part of undercover work, it is nevertheless covert in nature and there is little or no accountability (Joh, 2009). Consequently,

constant self-discipline is required of the undercover officer so that his integrity is never compromised or destroyed as a law enforcement officer.

Conclusion

The undercover officer must rely upon anonymity and obscurity due to the secrecy of his investigations, and he typically assumes a false identity in order to infiltrate areas where the uniformed officer cannot. He attempts to blend in among his targets, dressing and grooming himself in a manner that will allow him to circulate in certain places undetected as he gathers intelligence and evidence for his investigation. Originating in France in the late 18th century, the primary objective of undercover policing is to identify suspects and obtain evidence for a successful prosecution. This typically involves a six stage process of selecting the undercover officer, training him, planning the operation, deploying the team, terminating the operation, and reintegrating the officer into normal police work. Employed in a variety of criminal investigations and often in cooperation with all levels of law enforcement, this investigative technique is unique not only for the manner of its intelligence-gathering function but also for the physical and psychological risks to the officer as he participates in the crimes he has been assigned to investigate. Additionally, the undercover officer is vulnerable to the dangers associated with confrontations with other officers while they are undercover, to the possible development of alcohol and/or drug addiction, to questions of legality regarding their deceptive methods, and to the constant threat to their integrity as a result of authorized criminality.

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17 March 2013

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ENG 241 WC1

Symbolism and Allegory: A Critical Interpretation of Chaucer's The Canterbury Tales

While Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* are without a doubt one of the most brilliant works of literature in English literary history, Chaucer, through incredible skill and ingenuity as a writer, manages to blend social criticisms of medieval society into an allegorical work that stands the test of time even today. Truthfully, while Chaucer's tales serve as commercially successful depictions of numerous interesting characters, the underlying themes embedded in *The Canterbury Tales*—referencing everything from the impending perils of the Black Death to the futuristic shakeup-up of the Protestant Reformation—would simultaneously predict and serve to alter the course of history, whether this be seen through messages of corruption, misogyny, honor, or even the lack thereof.

First and foremost, Chaucer begins his criticism of Middle Age society by offering descriptions of each of the key characters taking a pilgrimage to Canterbury Cathedral, particularly the Knight. Depicted in ragged chain mail and a stained tunic, the Knight is a military veteran who has fought extensively in the Crusades; in fact, he is noted for having just returned from an expedition in the east before beginning his pilgrimage. So, why is he primarily important to the work as a whole? Well, the Knight is notable for his unwavering honor and service; indeed, his esteemed career is unquestionable and impeccable, to such degrees that honor itself is extremely important to him. His tale, a story regarding two cousins (Palamon and Arcite) who fall madly in love with the same woman (Emelye), is in the end a harrowing

demonstration of duty and devotion. Palamon and Arcite's friendship and loyalty is tested in the pursuit of Emelye, sometimes to violent degrees, however the chivalry of Arcite in death grants Palamon tremendous happiness in life when he endorses Palamon and Emelye's marriage. Yet, such honorable notions of loyalty and devotion are mere pipedreams of a bygone age. As Chaucer would express all too well in his analysis of other major characters taking the Canterbury pilgrimage, honor is a pastime that is beginning to hold little merit in society, symbolized primarily in the knight's stained and ruined armor, the crumbling symbol of his cherished knighthood. Indeed, with the developed technology of siege warfare and the introduction of improved weaponry (such as the longbow and catapult) the degradation of chivalry was set in motion to such a degree that this element became a defining sign only of antiquity both in terms of warfare and society in general (Dougherty 23).

One of the most widely interpreted sections of Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales* is that of The Miller's Tale, told by the Miller, a belligerent individual who rather abruptly disrupts the Host's carefully planned social order for telling stories on the pilgrimage. Told entirely in a drunken stupor, the Miller's Tale is an unapologetic presentation of wild themes. The story itself centers on a carpenter, John, and his young wife, Alisoun, as well as Nicholas, a clerk and student working under John. Eventually, Nicholas and Alisoun enter an adulterous relationship resulting in humor and deceit as Nicholas tricks John in ridiculous ways so as to be with Alisoun, including convincing him to fasten himself to the roof in a bathtub while the lovers sleep together. While such a tale could without a doubt conjure up multiple possible meanings, it is most likely that Chaucer meant for the tale to be allegorical of the Black Death. The Bubonic Plague, peaking in Europe around 1350, was responsible for wiping out nearly one-third of the continent's population, giving rise to bizarre courses of behavior such as the Flagellant

Movement, seeking to earn favor in God's eyes by subjecting its members to tremendous suffering and physical pain (Lecture 29). The social chaos of the Miller's Tale, such as when Nicholas disrespectfully sleeps with his master's wife, is symbolic in its own right. It is true that, during the course of the Black Death, disease transcended social barriers and was blind to wealth or status. Realistically, peasants succumbed to death, rotting in the fields, just as lords in their castles went to sleep and never woke. In fact, those who managed to stay alive possessed an important bargaining chip in society, simply considering the fact that there was generally less manual labor available within society. Wages increased greatly, and individuals of the lower class moved one step closer to social prominence. Nicholas and Alisoun's relationship, an act strongly defiant of traditional religious and social norms, at first seems impossible and ridiculous, but is sealed in fate due to the unpredictable actions of nature. Furthermore, the very fact that the Miller, a worker of low social standing, should follow the Knight (an honorable and noble figure) in telling a tale to the other pilgrims represents an abrupt shift in social norms and practices, symbolic in many ways of how the Black Death appeared and drastically shook up the social order of medieval society.

Indeed, the Knight's notion of the degraded state of chivalry appeared to have permeated previously hallowed institutions of respect and admiration, or at least Chaucer seemed to have thought so. Such a fact was never more justly illustrated than in Chaucer's depiction of another infamous character and story within *The Canterbury Tales*: the Pardoner. Initially, the reader is greeted with a stereotypical image of a would-be religious leader in the form of this character, however, as time progresses, and the pilgrims learn more about the Pardoner's true colors, this carefully rendered façade begins to crumble. Realistically, it is humorous to discover that, although the Pardoner practices at being a skilled singer and preacher of religious sermons, he

makes no effort to hide the fact that he is, essentially, nothing more than a glorified con artist. “Pardoners” during this period in medieval history were notorious for selling what became known as “indulgences,” or a reprieve from one’s sins and transgressions in exchange for a payment to the Catholic Church. Essentially, it was believed that one could pay to have their sins “forgiven” in the eyes of God if they had the money to finance it (Christ 290). Ultimately, many such pardoners collected these payments for themselves, and Chaucer’s pardoner is no exception, carrying around a bag of fake religious relics, including (what the Pardoner claims are) bones of religious saints and even the veil of the Virgin Mary. Most repulsively of all, however, the Pardoner makes no effort to disguise his untrue and dishonorable actions, openly admitting that he took on the role of a pardoner simply to make money as well as emphasizing that he thoroughly enjoys the ability to abuse authority.

So, how does this individual represent a severe criticism with medieval ideology? Well, the answer can be viewed in the Pardoner’s very character. In Middle Age literature, it was not entirely uncommon to abruptly depict a person’s nature by their mere appearance; truthfully, if the eyes are the windows to the soul, then the complete exterior was likely to tell the intentions of that soul. Depicted as a greasy, yellow haired man with an ambiguous appearance in regards to gender, it is ultimately no surprise that the Pardoner holds a shiftily demeanor and questionable intentions, even though he is gifted charismatically. Furthermore, his tale to the pilgrims, an ill conceived story of three travellers who inadvertently kill one another in the pursuit of enormous wealth, symbolizes the Pardoner’s only thoughts in life, as well as reeks of the corrupt nature of medieval clergy. In reality, it would appear as if Chaucer grossly exaggerated the Pardoner’s entire persona to demonstrate in a single character the many flawed elements of the Catholic Church. Certainly, it was no surprise to anyone that indulgences and similar forms of spiritual

“forgiveness” were being widely circulated, however the unprecedented dishonesty, sin, and even blasphemy associated with such actions called into question the true holiness of the church. Chaucer was a whistle-blower of his day, a true journalist who called things as they were. In all actuality, pardoners were not required to have proven skill or sincerity in selling religious “relics” or pardoning the sins of the masses; many simply took up the trade because it was promising financially, in turn paving the way for further abuse and corruption within the Catholic Church (Minnis 98). Disturbingly, Chaucer presented the idea that, if individuals similar to the Pardoner are only one piece of a larger network of self proclaimed preachers and forgivers of sin, what was the world coming to? Who would there be left to turn to if the Catholic Church failed in its spiritual guidance? The answer was sadly uncertain. Ultimately, then, it would have been with little surprise from Chaucer if he were alive to witness Martin Luther nail his Ninety Five Theses to the door of a Wittenberg Chapel, criticizing the teachings and practices of the Catholic Church and immediately catalyzing the Protestant Reformation. Contrary to the belief of many, Luther’s novel ideas were not as spontaneously conceived as they may have appeared; in truth Chaucer had long before painted an accurate picture of the Pardoner’s reception by his fellow pilgrims, one of hostility and anger once they recognized his true motives, a symbol in many ways of the hostility the Catholic Church would face for its transgressions for decades to come.

Yet, the flawed actions of the Pardoner is not the only point Chaucer wishes to make during the course of *The Canterbury Tales* in regards to religion. Notoriously, the Monk and the Friar, two supposedly pious individuals, do not fall far below the Pardoner in terms of dishonesty and sinfulness. Specifically, the Monk, an extravagant and materialistic being who grossly ignores St. Benedict’s rule that monks should live a life of simplicity, is illustrated as a lover

more of extravagance than of God, as evidenced by his unnecessarily expensive gold pin used to fasten his hood. Similarly, the Friar, a roaming priest who actively befriends the rich and despises the poor, despite his supposed duty to show compassion for them, is infamously depicted as being so low on the morality scale that he selfishly requires a bribe to even hear confessions. However, another religious figure is also of note during the course of *The Canterbury Tales*. The Parson, surprisingly enough, is strongly depicted as the epitome of a pious individual, a true gentleman who swears to help the poor and meek, rather than scorn and look down on them. Such a stark comparison between ideologies is no accident; in fact, it is likely Chaucer actively emphasized the incomparable spirituality among the Monk, Friar, and Parson as a means of further criticizing the Catholic Church or institutionalized religion in general. In fact, the Parson, a humble priest of a rural county church, is comparable to the embodiment of Jesus Christ, a follower of modesty and simplicity. Alternatively, the Friar and Monk, two ordained members of Christianity, are seen as fundamentally flawed and corrupted. The argument is present and obvious here; essentially, Chaucer believes that smaller, more local sects of Christian religious practice is the way to go in terms of honoring God. Given the widespread corruption of the Catholic Church during this time, such a notion is not very surprising, considering the fact that the church and its widespread influence was so notorious for abusing power and defying its own religious principles.

Still, to say that *The Canterbury Tales* were solely fixated on criticisms of the ever-changing nature of society and the corruption of the Catholic Church would be a mistake to say the least, and it is certainly true that Chaucer held his own perplexing beliefs that are subconsciously present in his work. This is most prevalent in the character and tale of the Wife of Bath. Supposedly “well educated” in the art of love after five marriages, the Wife of Bath is

difficult to classify upon first notice; she is fiercely independent, possessive, and specific as to what she wants out of life. She makes no secret in the fact that she uses her husbands for her own financial gain, and verbally abuses them as a form of gaining some degree of dominating power in the relationship. In fact, she marries numerous older men for just this reason; in short, she enjoys sexual manipulation, and even emphasizes that she would be willing to commit murder in the name of preserving her own happiness. Her tale, focusing on the efforts of a dishonored knight to prove his own honor, ends in a theme emphasizing that all women should live for the sole purpose of satisfying their husbands' needs (Christ 275). A modern interpretation of the Wife of Bath's demeanor would immediately suggest some degree of misogyny on behalf of the author. In all actuality, a huge level of hatred toward women was present in Chaucer's time, and it is certainly no understatement in saying that most men viewed women as lustful, created only as a way of "testing" a man's honor and devotion to God. Furthermore, women were viewed virtually as cattle during the Middle Ages, a commodity which were (rather wrongly and ridiculously) depicted as having mystical powers over men in medieval lore (Blamires 20). While the Wife of Bath's independent nature is admirable, ultimately Chaucer ties her to a fixation for her husband's love; in other words, while she appears dominating and possessive, it is entirely clear that she absolutely needs her husband to show her some form of love and desire to merely stay alive. Therefore, she is entirely dependent of her husbands despite repeatedly denying such a notion, a theme Chaucer likely thought necessary to confirm in his day and age. Thus, in essence her drive and true demeanor as a character shows no more power than a clingy housewife, no more domination than a self-obsessed sociopath.

Overall, it is true that Geoffrey Chaucer strongly embedded allegorical themes within *The Canterbury Tales*, easily the most symbolic and critical of all his works. Yet, whether this work

symbolizes, criticizes, or simply documents medieval society, the simple fact remains that *The Canterbury Tales* is an entertaining and effective example of literary genius, a ravishing work of art and historical analysis that has stood the test of time.

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Non-Research Essays

*Accursed, And in a Cursed Hour: Solipsism and the Allegorical Relationship of Satan, Sin,
Death and the Fall of Man in Paradise Lost*

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British Literature 2

April 3, 2013

Book two of *Paradise Lost* begins with Satan "high on a throne of royal state" deep in the bowels of Hell (2,1) and ends with his approach to Paradise "full fraught with mischievous revenge (2,1052)." In between these two poles he travels to the gates of Hell and through the chaotic realms just beyond to where the newly created universe is "fast by hanging in a golden chain" from Heaven (2,1051). During this journey, the reader is treated not only to memorably evocative poetry, but also to the introduction of Satan's wife and offspring: Sin and Death. The reader also realizes that in the construction of this unholy trinity, John Milton has alarmingly not made the terms "wife" and "offspring" mutually exclusive.

Paramount to understanding the incestuous nature of the relationship between Satan, Sin, and Death is not only noting its inherent selfishness, or its even deeper self-absorption, but recognizing its thoroughgoing solipsism. Meaning, literally, "the self alone," solipsism is the ultimate "center of the universe" feeling, an idea with cosmic implications in Milton's time and deep social, psychological and moral implications in both his time and in our own. Without understanding this concept, it is impossible to fully appreciate the claustrophobic intensity of their relationships.

Indeed, Sin's withering question to Satan---"Has thou forgot me then/now in thine eye so foul, once seemed so fair" (Book 2, 747-748)---hints at the labyrinthine twists and turns of self-love and self-deception that were required to create this trinity. As suggested in Sin's above-quoted query, in order to maintain this blindness, an amazing level of self-deception (today we call it denial) is needed; hence, Death and Sin are banished from both Heaven and Satan's mind during the fall and his forgetting of them is so pronounced that upon encountering them, he doesn't even recognize them. It is the supreme irony of solipsism that a person may feel that he alone creates the universe and gives all meaning and value to that creation---in essence, usurping

the place of a truly generous Creator and Creation---but in reality finds only creation's antithesis: a world that shrinks away to nothingness.

Sin springs from Satan's head. Is this enough to lead inevitably to his fall? Like Narcissus, he's transfixed with Sin as his own image: "Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing/Became enamored" (2, 764-765). Milton places the war in heaven during the time *before* Sin gives birth to Death. The text suggests that the war in Heaven was needed to bring the pregnancy to term; that is, the tightening solipsism in Satan's mind needed the outlet of rebellion to bring relief, an event which binds him even closer, through childbirth, to Sin. Thinking along these lines is as dizzying as Satan's long fall from Heaven which serves as a great metaphor for the atomized self becoming increasingly lonely and self-dependent, tumbling down into confusion. Set against the "tyranny of Heaven" Milton invites us to consider if this trinity is any less tyrannical. Is being bound by the self truly preferable to being bound by others? Are we always bound to something, and is the only true choice we ever have the choice of what we bind ourselves to? Sin taunts Satan and Death with this idea by pointing out that even if they fight to the death they are both simply God's "drudge, to execute whate'er his wrath, which he calls justice (2,732-33)."

The figure of Death serves as offspring, companion, and enemy to Sin. They are hardly naturally happy partners. Sin is terrified of Death (Hell itself "trembles at the hideous name" of Death [2, 788]), who forcibly rapes her---the next folding in of the trinity. The hounds she gives birth to and who return to her womb in constant and eternal cycles of rebirth to appear to be Milton's way of acknowledging that the continuing story of solipsism is one that could be written literally forever, that there's simply no turning off the eternally vanishing inwards. Furthermore, Sin explains to Satan that her son Death would "his parent would full soon devour/For want of

other prey" (2,805-6) but sets the hounds on her instead since "he knows/His end with mine involved; and knows that I/Should prove a bitter morsel (2,806-8)." Because they spring from the same self, their fates are inextricably intertwined. Milton also asks us to contrast this curdled portrait of the trinity in Hell with the expansively painted picture of the trinity in Heaven in book four of his epic. Viewed through this lens (and pointedly suggested later in book nine) Satan's original and recurring belief that "the mind is its own place, and in itself/Can make a Heav'n of Hell, a Hell of Heav'n" (1, 254-255) is positively chilling. Is this belief heroic and inspirational or cowardly and delusional? Contrasting the Council in Hell with the Council in Heaven, Milton seems to suggest that it depends on the mind in question, whether or not it's expansive and generous or vanishingly self-centered. Heaven is created the selfless mind; Hell is created in the solipsistic one.

Milton also mentions another condition necessary for incest, metaphorical or otherwise: secrecy. Sin tells Satan that although she was conceived "in sight of all the Seraphim with [Satan] combined in bold conspiracy against Heav'n's King" (750-1), Satan then took her "in secret (767)." Sin gives birth to Death while alone at the gates of Hell, in what is surely one of the most gruesome birth scenes in literature:

Pensive here I sat
Alone, but long I sat not, till my womb
Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown
Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes.
At last this odious offspring whom thou seeest
Thine own begotten, breaking violent way
Tore through my entrails, that with fear and pain
Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
Transformed: but he my *inbred enemy*
Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart
Made to destroy: I fled and cried out 'Death...'
(2, 777-787)

Not only was Death conceived in secrecy but also birthed in secrecy, far from the eyes of others. Immediately after his birth, Death rapes Sin and she again gives birth, this time to the "yelling monsters" that surround her (2,795). All of this happens at the gates of Hell, with both Sin and Death alone save each other, until the appearance of Satan, progenitor of both, and what he promises them is neither transformation or redemption, since he can promise neither---Sin has already explained that God's wrath will destroy them someday (2,734)---but "to set [them] free from out this dark and dismal house of pain (2,822-23)." However, when explaining the purpose of his mission to Death and Sin he recognizes the necessity of secrecy as vital to their freedom, for when he vows to secure them a place in Paradise he says that they "shall dwell at ease, and up and down *unseen*/Wing silently the buxom air (2,841-42)."

And, of course, in book nine, shame and the subsequent need for secrecy are among the first consequences of the fall of man. Adam calls shame "the last of evils" (9, 1079) and the shame Adam and Eve feel after their sexual consummation is observable on their faces: "evident the signs of foul concupiscence" (9, 1077-78), leading Adam to lament that he could no longer look on the face of God or angels since the opulence of Paradise was now "insufferably bright" and to wish only to "in solitude live savage" (9, 1084-85). This line forcefully expresses the idea of removal from the sight of God. Not only has the original sin removed them from God, but the subsequent shame has produced a longing to be unseen by God and to begin a life lived in shadows. Later lines make this idea even more clear when Adam and Eve fashion clothes made from fig leaves to hide not only from God but from each other---a useless endeavor that they are nonetheless drawn to, believing that these new clothes would protect them from the judgement of "this newcomer, shame" who would "reproach us as unclean" (9, 1097-98).

Here, Satan and his offspring have claimed their place in Paradise and the tension between the world of a "self alone" and a world of things beyond the self is set forever in play in the considerations of humanity. Consider Adam's words to Eve before he as he decides to join her in her fallen state:

...if death
Consort with thee, death is to me as life;
So forcible within my heart I feel
The bond of nature draw me to my own,
My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;
Our state cannot be severed, we are one,
One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself.
(9, 953-59)

Upon first glance, these lines convey beautifully expressed devotion and sacrifice, but may they not also be read as a nearly perfect expression of solipsism? A close reading suggests that Milton viewed this as an ambiguity in human existence and that the boundaries may not always be clearly defined. Note, too, how Death now retains his secrecy by masquerading as life to Adam through his bond to Eve. To draw attention to further parallels in the text between the fall of man and the fall of Satan is unnecessary and redundant, so perfectly are those parallels expressed within the poem. The reader needs only the sad, plaintive last lines of book nine, in which Adam and Eve argue about who bears the most responsibility for the fall, to bring the theme of solipsism full circle, describe the never-ending nature of the fall, and set the stage for the promise of redemption in book ten:

Thus they in mutual accusation spent
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning,
And of their vain contest appeared no end.
(9, 1187-89)

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Mr. Atwood

5 October 2012

My Most Embarrassing Moment

Growing up, my father dutifully reminded me more than once about the dangers of dating crazy girls. “Son”, he’d say, “you can’t tell which ones are crazy just by lookin’ at ‘em”. More than once in my life, I’ve learned firsthand that Daddy was right. Once in particular, my inability to distinguish a crazy girl from a sane one resulted in what I sincerely hope will be, for the rest of my life, the most embarrassing thing I’ve ever experienced.

Several years ago, I met a delightfully pretty young lady, and I was incredibly flattered by her continued flirtation. She came from a very upstanding family, and I met her at Church, so I assumed she’d be a great catch. Her father was a beloved local physician, so I assumed that she might have inherited his intelligence. Beautiful, intelligent and moral – I thought I’d hit the dating jackpot.

Not long after she and I were formally introduced, I ran into her at the grocery store. A few days later, we bumped into each other, quite literally, at my favorite coffee shop. As I dabbed the spilled coffee from my suit jacket, she apologized profusely, and I flirted shamelessly. We exchanged numbers, and later that evening, I asked her out. She suggested dinner the following evening, and I was quite excited that I’d landed a date with her.

The following evening, I picked her up at the appointed time, dutifully escorting her to the car and opening doors as a gentleman should. We decided to drive into the city for dinner, and the conversation during the hour-long drive was delightful. As we ordered dinner, I looked

around the restaurant and decided that my date was, by far, the hottest girl in the room. The evening progressed to dessert and coffee, and finally, having run out of excuses to prolong the evening, I dropped her off. We went out to dinner twice more the following week, and I didn't notice a single red flag. However, as we spent more time together, I began to realize that she wasn't as smart as I had assumed her to be. While this was a slight disappointment, I was still quite content to continue dating her.

I can't pinpoint the exact moment it began to happen, but after three weeks, I realized that she had become substantially more attached to me than I was to her. She began showing up at my office without advance notice, and she'd whine and complain when my secretary would tell her I wasn't available. She began to assume that we would be spending every evening together, even without any indication from me that I'd be available. Four weeks into our dating adventure, she magically appeared, uninvited, in the audience at my City Council meeting, and afterward made it very obvious to anyone who'd listen that she was "Joshua's girlfriend".

Looking back, I now realize that I didn't do enough, early enough, to ward off the coming train wreck. I should have swiftly but gently applied the brakes, making it clear to her that I was a man who took my time in everything, relationships included. Instead, I began to simply ignore her for large stretches of time. I didn't generally reply to her text messages during the workday, even after she sent four or five in a row, and I made excuses regularly for why I couldn't spend time with her after work. Rather than candidly telling her we needed to spend some time apart in order to maintain a healthy dating relationship, I simply stuck my head in the sand and made excuses. Five weeks or so after our first date, I was fully aware that I had absolutely no future with this young woman. I became more disinterested every day, due in large part to her increasingly obsessive behavior.

One evening, my secretary and I met for coffee after work. She and I were close friends, and I was her de facto “big brother”. She needed some relationship advice and an ear to listen to her problems, and I was happy to provide both. I explained to “clingy girlfriend” that I had an appointment after work, and that when I finished, I’d call her to make plans for dinner. I even told her my exact agenda – who I was having coffee with, where we’d be, and that my secretary needed to discuss some personal things. Three minutes after my secretary and I sat down with coffee, just as she was beginning to pour her heart out, clingy girlfriend walked in the door of the café. After ordering coffee, without being invited or asking for permission, she sat down at our table and inserted herself into our very private conversation. Within thirty seconds, my secretary, without saying a word, stood up, collected her things, and left. Clingy girlfriend gave no indication that she was aware of her social faux pas or the fact that she’d deeply offended my secretary by her intrusion on our previously scheduled private meeting. Rather than pointing out the obvious, though, I held my tongue and proceeded with our evening as if nothing had happened.

A few days after the secretary debacle, clingy girlfriend and I double-dated with one of my closest friends and his new girlfriend. I tried my best to hide my growing disdain for “clingy”, and managed to make the dinner conversation seem as unstrained as possible given the situation at hand. The four of us discussed a number of things, and eventually settled on the topic of modern kids and their lack of manners or respect. After my friend’s girlfriend described a particularly unpleasant encounter with a disrespectful kid, clingy girlfriend grabbed my hand and replied, loud enough for the whole restaurant to hear, “yeah, babe, our kids will never act that way”. I dropped my fork, and my friend just stared, mouth agape, waiting to see how I’d react to

this obviously presumptuous statement. I changed the subject, and “check, please” was muttered at the earliest opportunity.

The next day, I decided it was finally time to address the clingy girlfriend problem. I asked her to meet me at my office that afternoon, explaining that we needed to discuss something serious. I had intentionally planned to meet her at my office for this conversation, because I was genuinely afraid that if it happened at my house, I might never get her out the door. At the office, I thought, I’d have backup. She arrived, greeted by an icy stare from my secretary. As I escorted her to my conference room, she made a point of being overly affectionate in front of my staff. I had already warned them that they were likely about to witness something quite unpleasant, so they all perked up when she walked through the office. I asked her to have a seat, and I took a chair on the opposite side of the table, hoping to indicate the seriousness of the impending conversation. I quickly and efficiently explained that I saw no serious relationship with her in my future, that I believed she and I had different goals for our lives at that point, and that I believed it in the best interest of both of us that we no longer date. I explained that I valued the time we were able to spend together, and that I had enjoyed getting to know her. It was my hope, I explained, that she and I would remain friends. At that moment, it appeared that she had taken it well. She stood up gracefully and gave me a quick hug. As she left the conference room, she said that she understood, but when she was no more than three feet down the hall, I heard a noise that could be likened to a dying cow. She began sobbing uncontrollably, and continued to sob all the way out the door.

While I had already recognized that she was perhaps becoming a bit too obsessed with me, I didn’t realize the full extent of her attachment until I had “the talk” with her that day in my office. I had made it a point to almost constantly define our relationship in my conversations

with her, indicating that, while I was dating her exclusively, I was not anxious to delve into a serious relationship. She and I never once said “I love you”, and we hadn’t even slept together. By all accounts, she and I were simply two people who were enjoying dating and spending time together. As she screamed and sobbed through her exit after our discussion, though, I began to more fully realize that she was substantially more attached to me than I realized.

I didn’t hear from her at all after that – her text messages stopped immediately, and for that I was honestly thankful. A few days later, I was headed to my favorite café for after-work coffee when I received a text from my best friend, who happened to own the café. “Might want to avoid café – she’s here”, he warned. Later that evening, I learned that clingy now-ex-girlfriend had spent the whole evening there waiting for me to come by for coffee. Soon, a pattern emerged. Clingy would show up at the café around 5:00pm and hang around waiting for me to show up. At times, I was informed, she would interrogate the staff of the café to try to find out if I’d been there or if they’d talked to me recently. More than once, apparently, she quietly sobbed while she drank her coffee. I never made an appearance, of course, because my friends always warned me that she was there, and I was not anxious to see her. What she didn’t realize was that the minute she left the café in the evening, I’d get a “coast is clear” text and head in for my evening coffee. After about a week of this, my friend who owned the café finally confronted her. He explained that I was intentionally avoiding the café, and that I’d likely continue to do so as long as she continued to camp out there waiting for me. He asked her to respect my decision to no longer date her, and to understand that nothing would be accomplished by waiting around for me.

She apparently heeded his advice, and an entire week passed without a single clingy-ex-girlfriend appearance at the café. Finally, I decided it was time to resume my evening coffee-

drinking routine. After all, it was “my” café”, owned by my dear friends. For years, I had had coffee or dinner there virtually every evening after work, and I decided that I shouldn’t let some crazy clingy ex-girlfriend stop me from living my life. I made plans to meet a friend there for coffee one evening, and it was nice to get back to my regular routine. The friend I met for coffee was an avid Facebook user, regularly using the “check in” feature when she was out for dinner or drinks. Ordinarily, I’d have used this feature myself, but given my situation, I had been avoiding it. My friend, though, “tagged” me in her Facebook post. The whole Facebook world, crazy-ex-girlfriend included, would know my whereabouts if they cared to look, so I was certain that the crazy train would soon derail.

Within literally four minutes of my friend’s Facebook post, I looked up just in time to see Clingy’s car pull into the parking lot. The café was crowded that evening – virtually every table was occupied, mostly by people I knew. Clingy stormed in the door, and immediately threw herself at me. She tried to sit in my lap, but thankfully I was sitting at the table in such a way that it was impossible for her to occupy my lap. She began sobbing uncontrollably, babbling words that were incoherent at best. When I was finally able to pull her away from me, I realized that the entire shoulder of my shirt was wet from her tears. I tried to calmly explain that this was not the place for such behavior, but she continued to babble. The fact that she was sobbing made it nearly impossible to catch every word she spoke, but I managed to make out “not taking it well”, “miss you so much”, “can’t handle not having you” and several other strong emotional statements. By this point, literally every eye in the café was on us, and I was mortified. I stood up, trying to make my way to the door. I explained, as calmly as possible, that we couldn’t have this conversation in public, and that I had to leave. Before I could fully stand, she was again wrapped around me, this time with both her arms and legs.

I was finally able to extricate myself from her grip, then from the café. However, the damage had been done – I had been humiliated in front of a café full of people I would have to see again on a daily basis, including a couple of my clients. I worried that she might follow me to my car, but she instead decided she would camp out at the café. I later learned that she stayed there, sobbing audibly, until the staff literally had to ask her to leave.

I suspect that she embarrassed herself as much as she embarrassed me, because I didn't see her again for months after that. Several weeks later, she sent a lengthy email apologizing for her behavior, and I accepted the apology. Fortunately, those who were present to witness the incident that night found it quite humorous, and I am finally able to laugh at it myself. Ever since, though, I've been even more conscious of my Daddy's words of wisdom. Truly, you can't tell if a pretty girl is crazy just by looking at her.

Dusk and Dawn: the Sunrise and Sunset of life

When I think of dawn's early morning sunrise, I imagine an array of pink and purple clouds hanging low on the horizon. I picture slender beams of light peeking out from behind the clouds; the warmth of the sun warming the body and soul. The sunrise brings the dawn of a new life upon the earth, much like a sunrise in the soul. But just as dawn has the sunrise, there must be a sunset that follows.

I think of the dawn as if it were an innocent child; awake with adventure and fresh as the morning dew. The first glimpse of light breathes life into the child, and the soul awakens. The feel of wet grass between his toes and the crisp morning air fills his lungs as he goes out into the world. His senses overloaded with bright colors and smells he has never experienced before. Feeling the first rays of sunshine upon his face, the child ventures out to explore and seek out the day.

As time goes on, the child grows older and soon becomes a man. It is not long until the sun is high in the sky, beating down on him. He continues to live his life, finding joy and happiness as time races on. He begins to feel the effects of the long day and knows dusk is upon the horizon. His body has grown weary and frail, but still he struggles on.

The dawn of a child is now the dusk of an old man. He realizes his day is almost over, and his shadow is getting longer. The sun will soon be setting, and dusk is fast approaching. The dawn of the man's life must meet the sunset. He takes with him all the knowledge of the

past as he prepares for the future. He knows that the bright and early days of dawn are all most over, and that the dark and final days of night will be the end of a long journey.

He must now turn and face the sunset in the west; the last moment of sunlight is warm against his face. The finale sunset fills the sky with hues of blue and red. The clouds on the horizon are large and gray, like harbingers, heralds rolling in from a distant storm.

Dusk and dawn dance together for a brief moment; the pinks and purples blend together with the reds and blues, forming darker versions of themselves. The colors interlace and become as one both the beginning and the end.

The wind begins to whisper and whirl around the man. The air becomes dense and cold as the sun disappears forever from the sky. The atmosphere turns dark and dreary, filled with daunting clouds that seem to consume the warmth of the air. Dusk has arrived, and its bitter cold chills the man to the center of his existence.

The man must say farewell to the light of day. He must now dance with the night. Dusk has taken over, and the man's soul must now rest in peace. The light of dawn must now surrender to the dusk of night: yet what is darkness without light?

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